

July 25, 2007

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.), member of the House Committee on Homeland Security and the Border, Maritime and Global Counterterrorism Subcommittee, has introduced a resolution, **H. Res. 549, recognizing the importance of increasing maritime domain awareness and supporting the goals of America's Waterway Watch (AWW) program.**

"This resolution expresses support for a public awareness program that is pivotal to the homeland security of our country's maritime domain and urges citizens to do their part in helping to protect more than 95,000 miles of shoreline and over 290,000 square miles of water," said Bilirakis. "The potential security threats that individuals on small vessels pose are real and can be greatly reduced by engaging those who reside, work, or participate in recreational activities around America's waterways to be vigilant and report suspicious and unusual activities."

Following 9/11, in an effort to improve vigilance on our nation's waterways, Coast Guard units around the country joined with local boating groups to develop local maritime watch programs. AWW represents the success of these local initiatives, which have since been combined into a national effort to encourage reporting of suspicious activity and increased public awareness of maritime homeland security.

"Just like the Coast Watch Program of World War II, America's Waterways Watch enlists the aid of our greatest resource, our citizens - especially boaters, port workers, and others on or near the water. Through the eyes and ears of our devoted citizens, we will make all of America safer and more secure," said Captain Joseph A. Servidio, Captain of the Port and Commander of Coast Guard Sector St. Petersburg.

Co-sponsors of H. Res. 549 include: Rep. Brown-Waite, Ginny (R-FL); Rep. Buchanan, Vern (R-FL); Rep. Burton, Dan (R-IN); Rep. Crenshaw, Ander (R-FL); Rep. Diaz-Balart, Mario (R-FL); Rep. Duncan, John J., Jr. (R-TN); Rep. Feeney, Tom (R-FL); Rep. Keller, Ric (R-FL); Rep. Klein, Ron (D-FL); Rep. Lungren, Daniel E. (R-CA); Rep. Mahoney, Tim (D-FL); Rep. Miller, Jeff (R-FL); Rep. Putnam, Adam H. (R-FL); Rep. Sterns, Cliff (R-FL); Rep. Weldon, Dave (R-FL); and Rep. Young, Bill (R-FL).

To report suspicious activity, call the National Response Center at 1-877-24WATCH or 1-800-424-8802. In the case of immediate danger to life or property, contact local law enforcement by dialing 911.

- **Learn more about AWW at:** <http://www.americaswaterwaywatch.org> .
- **Download a brochure about America's Waterway Watch,** [here](#) .

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